

Date: October 25, 2019

Re: Time for Seattle to Wake Up and Vote

Partners,

For nearly 50 years, a Starbucks principle has been to proudly stand for what is right and act when our communities need support. We help coffee farming communities recover from devastating storms like Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico; we mobilize in places like Houston or Redding hit by unprecedented natural disasters; we comfort victims of unfathomable violence in El Paso, Dayton, and Las Vegas. In more than 30,000 locations around the world, we are committed to strengthening and uplifting the neighborhoods we serve.

That is especially true in our hometown of Seattle, which needs us more than ever.

You may remember when the city of Seattle declared a “state of emergency” over the homelessness crisis a few years ago. We encounter it every day – in our neighborhoods and in our stores.

Starbucks has pursued a three-part strategy to address this complex issue.

- First, we have focused on **supporting store partners in nearly 150 Seattle-area stores, who are on the front lines dealing with individuals facing drug addiction, mental illness, and serious health challenges** – and often a combination of all these things. In addition, the [decline in public safety](#) has forced local leadership to alter store operations to protect our partners and customers. This includes adjusting when stores open and close, working closely with the Seattle Police Department and local service providers, and providing de-escalation training to partners to help them better manage these challenges with compassion and care. In some instances, we’ve had to make difficult decisions to close stores that face too high a risk for partners and customers. Fortunately, when stores have closed, we have been able to provide partners opportunities in other locations. And while closing stores remains a last resort, we may need to repeat that approach given the [state of public health and safety](#) in our city.
- Second, we have sought to **help the most vulnerable in our neighborhoods: the hundreds of unsheltered families with small children who are sleeping and hiding in cars throughout the region**. Over three years, we have led the employer community’s support of the No Child Sleeps Outside campaign to help Mary’s Place provide emergency shelter to children who are outside through no fault of their own. With your support, we have brought the community together to raise awareness and more importantly, raise over \$9 million to open seven emergency shelters, increase diversion assistance to help families stay in their homes, and host eight [Family Resource Exchange events](#) around the region to provide critical resources. These events have provided housing and comfort to more than 4,000 people and 1,500 families. And we’re not done – several more events are planned throughout 2020, with the next **one this Saturday at Seattle Central College**.
- **And as our third strategy, we are asking for your help: use your voice to advocate for change**. For years, we have offered the 10,000 partners in our hometown with civic engagement tools like TurboVote and Countable to vote and engage their elected officials.

Along with thousands of Starbucks alumni in the Puget Sound region, the green apron is a formidable constituency! Your vote, your voice – whatever your opinion and choice may be – have never been more critical to the future of our hometown.

You likely have a ballot in your mailbox, and all I ask is you exercise your right to vote. Regardless of one's political views, everyone in Seattle has a right to a functioning and accountable government. Now is the time to demand one.

And finally, we are going to have some fun and encourage the rest of Seattle to join us in voting, by mobilizing around the city on Nov. 4 to serve coffee and remind Seattle to "Wake Up and Vote."

Thank you for everything you do, and please remember to vote by Nov. 5. Seattle needs you!

Proud to be your partner,

JK